



HORTICULTURE NEWS

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Notes from my desk: it has been hot, hot and hotter, unbelievable! Fall is definitely going to be appreciated by everyone and especially the area gardeners, we will be able to work outside again.

The yearly Master Gardener Intern graduation was well attended and many thanks to the committee members that put it together. With the backing of the Master Gardener's we put on the first ever "Rain Barrel Making Class" and 20 participants went home with their very own rain barrel.

A day does not go by in our office without calls about oak trees and the problems homeowners are seeing. The months of rain and high water then no rain and high heat has put a large amount of stress on woody ornamentals. Several site visits to determine the level of stress to these ornamentals has kept me very busy. Plants will begin to recover as the weather levels out and then it will be time to get ready for winter.

This will be my last horticulture newsletter since my position will be phased out. I've enjoyed these several years of providing timely and useful information. My position helped me to attain invaluable training that will never leave me. Thanks!

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What is a WaterWise Landscape?

A landscape designed and maintained according to basic good horticultural principles that allow for a beautiful healthy landscape with minimal supplemental irrigation and no adverse runoff from the landscape property. A WaterWise landscape can be evaluated according to its use of seven basic principles:

- * **Appropriate plant selection:** Select trees, shrubs and groundcovers based on their adaptability to your region's soil and climate. Texas is blessed with an abundance of beautiful native plants which are naturally adapted to the region. Most have lower water demands, fewer pest problems and less fertilizer needs than many non-adapted, exotic plants brought into Texas landscapes. Use the **PlantSelector** to determine which plants are best adapted for your region. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/plantselector>
- * **Planning and design:** A WaterWise landscape doesn't just happen. It is intentionally designed to enhance the natural space with minimal environmental impact. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service has an extensive program called Earth-Kind™ that takes into account many factors in addition to water use. For more information, visit their web site: Earthkind.tamu.edu
- * **Soil preparation:** Preparation of the bed areas for annuals and perennials and planting holes for trees and shrubs is crucial to their survival. A soil analysis is essential for a WaterWise landscape plan. Results of the analysis, and actions needed to alter the quality of the soil, are also essential components. Soil depth dictates which plants will thrive in an area and how much water they will need. The beginning point for such an analysis should always be a soil test. For more about soil tests visit the TAMU soil testing lab web site: <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>. The method of soil improvement in a WaterWise landscape is important. First choice is use of compost. Other additives are more short term in nature and may require additional supplemental irrigation.
- * **Practical turf areas:** Turf areas are important to the well-balanced urban landscape. Select the appropriate grass species and consider the size and geometry of turf areas for optimal water use. Turf should be used for play and entertainment areas, and to slow down, absorb, and clean runoff. Turf is a design element. The WaterWise landscape does not consist of only acres of manicured turf rolling over the hills, but it does include turf strategically placed and appropriate turf plant selection based on use. Turf will usually need supplemental irrigation, but the varieties of turf vary greatly in their water needs. Turf grass needs eight inches of soil to allow for a deep root system that can survive limited watering or extended drought. Turf should not be placed in narrow hard to irrigate areas or near hardscape so that irrigation water must water the hardscape as well as the turf. New turf varieties are consistently introduced into the marketplace. Recent studies in San Antonio have determined a number of turf varieties with excellent drought dormancy characteristics. For more information, visit <https://aggieturf.tamu.edu>

IN THE GARDEN

- * **Efficient irrigation:** Of the tremendous amounts of water applied to lawns and gardens, much of it is never absorbed by the plants and put to use. Some water is lost to runoff by being applied too rapidly, and some water evaporates from exposed, unmulched soil; but, the greatest waste of water is applying too much too often. For a reference that enables the homeowner to estimate both water use and cost, visit the web site of the Texas WaterWise council and view the section on the Irrigation Calculator. <http://www.waterwisetexas.org>
- * **Use of mulches:** Use a mulch wherever possible. A good mulch conserves water by significantly reducing moisture evaporation from the soil. Mulch also reduces weed populations, prevents soil compaction and keeps soil temperatures more moderate. Inorganic mulch products include rocks, gravel and recycled rubber products. They hold more heat but don't decompose so don't have to be replaced yearly. Organic mulches include shredded bark, leaves, and chipped wood. Organic mulches decompose and therefore can add nutrient to the soil.
- * **Appropriate maintenance:** An added benefit of WaterWise landscapes is less maintenance. A well-designed landscape can decrease maintenance by as much as 50 percent through reduced mowing; once-a-year mulching; elimination of weak, unadapted plants; and more efficient watering techniques. Even the most WaterWise design can become water thirsty if not properly maintained. A proper maintenance program should include some of these in the schedule: aeration of mulched beds and turf areas, mowing frequently at the proper height, regular inspection of irrigation system and heads, and attending to plant health.

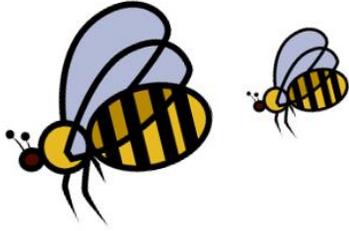


Source: Texas Urban Landscape Guide



“Water is the driving force of all nature.”

Leonardo da Vinci



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

BEEKEEPING FOR BEGINNERS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

**REGISTRATION 8:30—9
PROGRAM 9:00 — 4**

**\$25 includes both
sessions and lunch**

Pre-Registration Required by September 15
Seating is limited—call 835-8461

**Morning Session: “Introduction to Beekeeping” -
Brian Muldrow**

**Afternoon Session Topics will include:
“Top Bar Hives” “Plants and Bees” and
“Natural Pests of Bees”**

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Auditorium
1225 Pearl Street, #200**

Beaumont (corner of Franklin & Pearl)

409-835-8461



Sponsored by Jefferson County Horticulture Committee

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact Cary Erickson, Jefferson County Human Resources Director at (409) 839-2391 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

HORTICULTURE TIPS

North of us farmers and homeowners alike are battling against a heavy infestation of grasshoppers and while tiny now, without treatment they could double in size, numbers and amount of damage. We need to be on the look-out for them here.

“Looks like it could be a bad year for grasshoppers,” said Dr. Ed Bynum, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist in Amarillo. “If you have been out any at all you already know that they are everywhere.”

Bynum said there’s a wide assortment of grasshopper species present. The egg hatch typically ends by late June, but the nymphs will be molting four to five more times and will become adults over the next 60 days.

And that’s when the real damage will begin, he said.

“Right now the pastures, grasses and ditches still have a lot of green plants for the grasshoppers to feed on, which keeps them out of the crops in large numbers,” he said.

With warm, humid weather, grasshoppers can become infected and die from a naturally occurring entomopathogenic fungus, Bynum said. Infected grasshoppers move to the top of a plant and die in a characteristic pose, with the front and middle legs grasping the object and the hind legs extended out.

He warned, however, it is more likely they won’t be affected by this virus and will continue to grow and become more difficult to control.

AgriLife Extension publications recommend control measures begin while grasshoppers are still young nymphs and to treat along the hatching sites – roadsides, fence rows, etc.

To control the grasshoppers, Bynum said insecticide sprays and baits are the primary options. Baits are effective, but limited to those grasshoppers it attracts. Insecticide sprays can be used for larger acreage and are more economical. Canola oil added to the insecticide spray has been shown to improve control by making the treated plants more attractive to the grasshoppers.



He said there are numerous organophosphate, pyrethroid and other classes of insecticides labeled for grasshopper control in field crops. Primarily the pyrethroids will be labeled for urban/homeowner use.

Sevin products with carbaryl also are labeled for use by homeowners and in urban landscapes.

Each product is labeled for specific crops or non-cropland usage and should be consulted before use, Bynum said.

Another insecticide labeled for select crops and non-cropland areas is Dimilin 2L, a bio-insecticide. This product is an insect growth regulator that interferes with grasshopper nymphs ability to molt to the next life stage, he said.

“Since adults do not molt, this product is only effective against the small to medium - sized immature grasshoppers,” Bynum said. “But it does have a long residual activity.”

Two other products with a new chemistry insecticide are Besiege and Prevathon. These products contain the insecticide chlorantraniliprole, which provides good control of grasshoppers.

Prevathon only has this insecticide as its active ingredient, but Besiege is a chemical mixture of

chlorantraniliprole with a pyrethroid insecticide. Both products are labeled for use in several crops and for range, pasture, and forage and silage production of grass, Bynum said.

“But, neither of these products are labeled for use in non-cropland areas, so that means that homeowners do not have them as an option,” he said.

Bynum warned all chemicals have restrictions, so it is important to read the labels before use.

Source: AgriLife Today, article by Kay Ledbetter



“It’s our hope that, when the insects take over the world, they will remember with gratitude how we took them along on our picnics.”

Bill Vaughan

Urban Fruit Tree Workshop

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



Growing Fruit on the Gulf Coast

Saturday, September 26, 9:00am – 4:30pm

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
1225 Pearl Street #200, Beaumont
(corner of Franklin and Pearl)**



**Pre-registration required
by Sept. 18th
lunch is included
call (409) 835-8461**

\$25 per person

**Featured Speaker—Tom LeRoy, Retired County
Extension Agent, Horticulture, Montgomery County
Plus a local Citrus Panel**

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Muhly, Gulf (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

If you ever wanted to add a plant to your landscape that was low maintenance, colorful and had an interesting texture then this perennial native would fit the bill. Gulf muhly has many common names such as: Pink Muhly Grass, Pink Hair Grass, Hairy Awn and Regal Mist.

Homeowners are finding out that ornamental grasses are a wonderful addition to any landscape, acting as a specimen plant or focal point. You may also use them in mass plantings. Planting them on the east or west side of your house will provide a back light for the magenta blooms as they catch the sunlight and enhance the sunrise or sunset.



Gulf muhly is hardy to zone 11 and grows best in well-drained soil so plant 2 feet apart in a raised bed or amended area in sun to partial shade. The grass has low to medium water needs and grows to about 3 feet tall. They don't like a thick layer of mulch around the base of the plant, it can cause root rot. Spread a two-inch layer of mulch, but be sure to leave a two-inch ring free of mulch around the base of the plant.

The blooms will emerge in fall and last several months. In winter gulf muhlies will slowly start to turn a straw like color as the blooms become seed heads. In the spring and summer gulf muhlies will be smaller because of the lack of blooms and a deep green color.

To encourage full growth and make sure you get a good show out of your gulf muhlies, fertilize three times a year with an all-purpose organic fertilizer. Begin this program after they are established, once in September, a second time after pruning in February and a third time in June. Cut gulf muhlies back around Valentines Day. If you start to see new growth emerging before Valentines, cut them back before the new growth gets too big. The grass will become difficult to cut without damaging the new growth, if not cut back in time.

Gulf muhlies attract butterflies, birds and beneficial insects making your garden complete. You can divide the clumps of grass every two to three years in early spring while the plants are dormant.

Commercial and Recreational Fruit Growers to Gather



COLLEGE STATION — The fourth annual Texas Fruit Conference will bring together commercial and recreational growers to hear the latest on production challenges and successes, according to Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulturist in College Station.

The event will be Oct. 5-6 at the College Station Hilton and Conference Center and will coincide with the annual meeting of the North American Fruit Explorer's Southern Fruit Fellowship meeting. The annual Texas High Tunnel Conference will follow on Oct. 7 at the same location.

“The conference offers interesting topics on a variety of interests, from common fruit production such as peaches, strawberries and citrus, to less common ones such as kiwifruit and jujube,” Nesbitt said. “This program offers valuable information for seasoned fruit growers while also providing persons with no experience a place to learn how to get started.”

Talks will include peach tree pruning, fruit tree grafting, home orchard insecticides, weed management, organic fruit production, walnut production, beekeeping, fruit diseases and fruit business tips.

The Texas High Tunnel Conference is devoted to growing specialty crops — fruits, vegetables and ornamentals — in low-cost, plastic-covered greenhouses, according to Dr. Russ Wallace, AgriLife Extension horticulturist in Lubbock.

“High tunnels differ from greenhouses in their lack of supplemental heating or cooling and are increasingly being used throughout the world to extend the growing season or accelerate production and marketing of specialty crops,” he said.

Among the topics at this event will be a grower's story about bringing fruits and vegetables from farm to table, irrigation, pest management, consumer expectations and pollination.

For registration information, go to <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/Horticulture>

Source: AgriLife Today, Article by Kathleen Phillips

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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We're on the Web!

<http://jefferson.agrilife.org>

The Jefferson County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service educates Texans in all areas of agriculture including horticulture, marine sciences, environmental stewardship, youth and adult life skills, human capital and leadership, and community economic development. We offer the knowledge resources of Texas A&M and Prairie View A&M Universities to educate Texans for self-improvement, individual action and community problem solving. We, the Jefferson County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, are part of a statewide educational network and a member of the Texas A&M University System linked in a unique partnership with the nationwide Cooperative Extension System and Jefferson County Commissioners Court.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jefferson County Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, October 3rd, 8:00 to 1:00

Fall Vegetable Garden Seminar
Saturday, October 17th, 8:00 to noon
\$15.00 fee